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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#) [UNSC](#)

SUBJECT: NORTHERN IRAQ: KDP AND PUK TO UNIFY
ADMINISTRATIONS AND PESHMERGA, TURKMEN PARTICIPATE IN
IRBIL PROTEST, PUK COMPLAINS OF ITF INCITEMENT

REF: A. ANKARA 1374

[1](#)B. ANKARA 1360

Classified by DCM Robert Deutsch. Reasons 1.5 b and d.

Summary

[1](#)1. (S/NF) Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) Ankara rep Bahros Galali called on Operation Northern Watch POLAD March 3 to inform that after the Iraqi opposition conference in Salahadeen, PUK leader Jalal Talabani and Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) leader Masoud Barzani met and agreed to unify the KDP and PUK administrations and peshmerga forces. They have not announced this to the media and fear that Turkey could take news of this move as a pretext for an attack by claiming this was a move toward statehood. If asked, the KDP and PUK plan to say this is in fulfillment of the Washington Agreement. Galali said that if the KDP decided to fight the Turks, the PUK would be stuck fighting alongside the KDP. Galali told us that at least six Iraqi Turkmen parties (including non-KDP affiliates) participated in the Ref B demonstration in Irbil, holding banners in Turkish and chanting in Turkish "We oppose Turkish military intervention." Galali heard ITF reps on Turkish TV March 3 stating the ITF had left the Iraqi opposition and claiming Amb. Khalilzad had promised the ITF leaders that if the ITF were not included in the opposition leadership council within ten days, the US would reject the opposition leadership council. The PUK also alleges that KDP "PM" Nechirvan Barzani informed Saddam of US plans and sought Baghdad's help against the Turks should Turkey intervene. End Summary.

KDP and PUK to Unify Admins, Peshmerga

[1](#)2. (S/NF) PUK Ankara rep Galali asked to see ONW POLAD March [1](#)3. Galali said that after last week's opposition meeting in Salahadeen, northern Iraq, Barzani and Talabani along with several of their respective politburo members (NFI) had met and agreed to unify their administrations and peshmerga forces as quickly as possible. The KDP and PUK are working on the mechanics of the unification, but have made no announcements about it. While they saw this as critical to strengthening the Kurdish position in the end game before regime change, they also realized that the Turks could claim this was a step toward Kurdish statehood and use it as a pretext to intervene. The KDP and PUK have not informed the Turks or the media of the decision. If they are asked about it, they plan to say that it is in fulfillment of the Washington Agreement's provisions for reconciliation.

Turkmen Demonstrate AGAINST Turkish Intervention

[1](#)3. (S) Galali expressed concern regarding the burning of Turkish flags at Ref B anti-Turkey demonstration in Irbil March 3. He told us he had given a statement to Turkish TV that had been carried several times already in which he said that like Turkey, the KDP and the PUK allowed people to demonstrate, including against the leaders, but that the PUK did not support the burning of any flags. Galali said that the demonstration had been organized by students and intellectuals and that KDP and PUK supporters took part, although no leadership figures from either side did. He told

us Talabani had urged Barzani to avoid provocations to Turkey, but that the burning of one Turkish flag and the shredding of another had provoked the Turks. In an interesting twist, Galali reported that Turkmen from six political parties, including Turkmen not affiliated with the KDP, participated in the demonstration, chanting in Turkish and carrying banners in Turkish that read "We oppose Turkish military intervention," and "We don't need Turkey in our country."

Northern Iraqis Incited by GOT Remarks

14. (S/NF) Galali continued, saying that the demonstration indicated that the people of northern Iraq were now "really afraid" of a Turkish intervention. "If they want to stop refugees, why do they not stay on their border, or within a few km of it? But the Foreign Minister (Yakis) tells the press repeatedly they will send 80,000 soldiers and take away the guns from the Kurds. Erdogan told CNN Turk that if the US sends 40,000 troops, Turkey will send 80,000, and if the US sends 80,000, Turkey will send 160,000. This is a big mistake, and is making Barzani intransigent and emotional." Galali said the northern Iraqis were now sure that Turkey wanted to send its army to Irbil and Chamchamal, disarm the peshmerga and prevent displaced Kurds from returning home. He added that no Iraqi Kurd would relinquish his gun to a Turkish soldier and that a Turkish intervention was a recipe for chaos. How, he asked, could Turkey be unwilling to allow Kurds who had been evicted from their homes in Kirkuk or Mosul to return, even if they went unarmed? "Iraq," he said, exasperated, "is not Turkey and is not a Turkish country."

ITF Claims All Northern Iraq is Turkmen Land

15. (S/NF) Galali was upset about interviews with ITF reps that have aired in the past few days on Turkish television. In one, the ITF claimed that the Iraqi Kurds were distributing fake ID's to Kurds showing them to be displaced from Kirkuk so that the Kurds could take over that city. Galali said that Hasan Osman, Kemal Baytli, Sa'adun Koproglu and Sanan Aga (via telephone from Irbil) had given interviews to NTV (Turkish TV news) March 3, in which they said nothing about Saddam Hussein, but did claim that Irbil is a Turkish city that Barzani had taken from the Turkmen; showed what Galali described as a "shocking" map identifying everything in northern Iraq from Diyala to Zahko as Turkmen territory; and claimed there were at least 3.5 million Turkmen in Iraq. Galali contested those numbers strongly and posited that the Turks were trying to use the ITF to provoke the Kurds and create a pretext for Turkish intervention.

ITF: US Promised To Reject Opposition Leadership
Unless ITF Gets Spot in Leadership Council

16. (S/NF) Galali told us that the ITF reps claimed in the NTV interview that the ITF had dropped out of the Iraqi opposition following the Salahadeen conferece, but that Amb. Khalilzad had promised ITF leaders that if the ITF was not included in the opposition's leadership council within ten days, the US would reject the leadership council. Galali said that when Hasan Osman was asked if the ITF supported the US plan for Iraq, Osman said flatly, "No. We do not." Galali shared with us a conversation PUK peshmerga hero and former "PM" Khosrat Rasul Ali had with ITF Chairman Sanan Aga on the margins of the Salahadeen conference. According to Galali, Khosrat asked Aga why he had changed so much from being a friend of the Kurds to being so strongly opposed to them. Aga replied "What I have said isn't half of what Ankara told me to say." In Galali's view, the Turks have chosen the wrong surrogates in northern Iraq. There are Turkmen there that everyone can work with, he told us, but Sanan Aga was with Saddam until four years ago and is not anti-Saddam today.

17. (S/NF) Galali described the situation in northern Iraq as "very bad" for the KDP and the PUK. Talabani, he said, wants to work with the Turks so that the US plan will succeed, but Barzani is defiant and playing the role of defender of the Kurds against the Turks. "If Barzani decides to fight the Turks, we will be stuck alongside him."

PUK Says Nechirvan Went to Saddam w/US Plans
Seeking Help vs. Turkey

18. (S/NF) Finally, Galali said the PUK had information that after Amb. Khalilzad's early Feb. visit to Ankara, Nechirvan Barzani had contacted Saddam, briefed him on US plans as presented by Khalilzad, and asked for Saddam's support against Turkey should Turkey intervene in northern Iraq. Galali said that Barzani knew that the KDP could not hope to fend off the Turks by themselves and did not believe the US would do so for them. Comment: We have no way of knowing if Barzani actually contacted Baghdad or, if so, what was said. We note that Galali views Nechirvan with contempt and that the PUK keeps Barzani's 1996 decision to seek Saddam's assistance squarely in mind. However, the scenario is plausible. End comment.

PEARSON